



NEWS RELEASE



NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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Washington Vegetable Acreage Intentions - 2005

"According to the **asparagus** grower survey conducted earlier in March 2005, Washington asparagus acreage continues to drop as available markets shrink," says Ray Garibay, Director of the Washington Agricultural Statistics Service. "Washington growers have to contend with local processors going south of the border, as well as, fresh market imports from Mexico, Peru, and Chile. Little new acreage is being planted as older, marginal fields are taken out."

This winter was mild in Washington. Snow was very short this year, so water supplies are of concern at this time and for the upcoming season.

Harvest intentions for Washington asparagus is estimated at 13,000 acres. Harvested acreage in the state dropped 1,000 acres from last year, and 3,000 acres from two years ago. Acreage has dropped a total of 9,000 acres, or 41% since the 2000 crop. Washington has lost its number two ranking and is now the third largest grower of asparagus in the nation, behind number one California and number two Michigan.

"A processor survey was also conducted to collect processing **sweet corn** and processing **green pea** planted acreage intentions," according to Mr. Garibay.

Processing green pea seeding was underway in March, with 8% of the crop planted by the 27th. Planting intentions in Washington are expected to total 36,000 acres for the 2005 season, 400 acres more than the 2004 crop.

Processing sweet corn planted acreage is estimated at 80,600 acres this year, compared with 96,100 acres planted last year. This drop is, in part, a response to large cold storage holdings of frozen sweet corn.

Washington has dropped to the third largest U.S. grower of both processing green peas and processing sweet corn, behind Minnesota (#1) and Wisconsin (#2).